

2010

ANNUAL REPORT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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MISSION:

TO LEAD COLUMBUS IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY BY:

- * Enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance***
- * Educating the public***
- * Challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality***
- * Empowering community members to advance this mission.***



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CITY OF COLUMBUS - HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE:

“It is the public policy of the City to provide all persons an equal opportunity for and in education, employment, public accommodations and acquisition through purchase or rental of real property including but not limited to housing. Equal educational and employment opportunities and equal access to and use of public accommodations and equal opportunities for acquisition of real property and access to credit as defined in Indiana Code, 24-4.5-1-301, are declared to be civil rights.

The practice of denying these civil rights to a person by reason of race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry of such individual is contrary to the principles of equal opportunity stated in this chapter and shall be considered discriminatory practices.

The promotion of equal opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry through enforcement, public education and other reasonable methods is the purpose of this chapter. It is also its purpose to protect employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, property owners, real estate brokers, lending institutions and insurance companies from unfounded charges of discrimination through the professional investigation and resolution of complaints. This chapter shall be construed broadly to effectuate its purpose.” -- *Columbus Human Rights Commission Ordinance 9.24.020*

COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE - 2010

Commissioners:

Term Ends:

Gilbert A. Palmer (Chair)	2014
Greg Lewis (Vice-Chair)	2012
Trena Carter (Treasurer)	2014
John Roberts (Secretary)	2014
Akua B. Agyei	2012
Rhea Baker-Ipek	2014
Ian Kohen	2013
Anthony McClendon	2012
Rosalind Pegram	2013
Shiva Rallapalli	2013
John Stroh	2012

City Council Liaison: Priscilla Scalf

Commission Attorney: Eric Hayes

Staff:

Director: Arlette Cooper Tinsley

Deputy Director: Lorraine Smith

Secretary: Lula Young

2010 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Dear Mayor Armstrong, members of the Columbus City Council and Columbus citizens,

We have much to be proud of in Columbus. Our overall quality of life, including our schools, universities, world-renowned architecture, our nationally recognized parks and recreational facilities, all reflect the creativity, diligence and hard work of our citizens and local government working together. The shared values of diversity, justice and opportunity strengthen us in many ways as we continue to build a better community.

The Human Rights Commission and the volunteer Human Rights Commissioners are the torchbearers of these shared values and both are tasked with translating the principles into practice. The Commission is also responsible for enforcing the Human Rights' ordinance of our city, ensuring that all citizens can live happy, productive lives free of discrimination.



Gilbert A. Palmer,
Chairperson,
Human Rights Commission

I congratulate the Human Rights Commission staff, my fellow Commissioners, and all the volunteers who work diligently to make Columbus a place where all community members enjoy equally the benefits of our great community. For sixteen years, Director Tinsley has served the Commissioners faithfully. I recently told her that if I had only done one thing by hiring her as Director, I would have served the Commission well. While we will all miss Arlette, the Commissioners are pleased to have Lorraine Smith, long-time Deputy Director, take the helm. This decision was made unanimously by the Commissioners. As a community we are still accomplishing many "firsts"—including Lorraine Smith as the first African-American Director of the Commission and first African-American City Department Head. She will take the lead on May 27, 2011 and we are confident in the Commission's future with her leadership. The Commission will continue to build a just and inclusive community.

The Commission will continue to seek out collaborations with the local schools, the Heritage Fund, CAMEO—the Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization, the Interfaith Alliance, the NAACP, the Inclusive Community Coalition, the Pride Alliance and many other community groups. Our community is strong because of its collaborative initiatives. Part of the mission of the Human Rights Commission is "empowering community members" to advance human rights. Building an inclusive community requires many organizations that enrich Columbus, each in a different way.

The Commission understands that it must continually become more efficient and effective, as government resources are increasingly limited, but at the same time the Commission is aware that the role of civil rights enforcement is vital to the future economic health of Columbus.

The Commission is fortunate to have City Council-appointed Commissioners whose skill and dedication have made this successful year possible. We appreciate the support shown by this Mayor's administration and by City Council, as they support the vital work of the Commission.

With hard work, continuous improvement, and by forging cooperative alliances with other community groups, the Commission is committed to working toward this aim through the accomplishment of the goals we have set for 2011.

We remain in the service of the people of Columbus, and this report is

Respectfully submitted,

Gilbert A. Palmer

Gilbert A. Palmer

Chairperson, Human Rights Commission,

April, 2011 (for the 2010 Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission)

2010 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Year in Review

"It is often easier to become outraged by injustice half a world away than by oppression and discrimination half a block from home." – Carl Rowan, *journalist and public servant*

INTRODUCTION

The Columbus Human Rights Commission began as the first local human relations agency in Indiana in 1962, led by then local attorney, Lee Hamilton, as chairperson (now retired from the House of Representatives). The Human Relations Committee was charged with desegregating housing in Columbus. The Commission's mission has expanded to include employment, education, public accommodation and credit, but continues to be led by eleven community leaders who serve as volunteer Commissioners, appointed by City Council to three-year, renewable, staggered terms. The Commissioners, chaired by local businessman and community leader Gilbert A. Palmer, hires and supervises the staff, who conduct the daily operations of the Columbus Human Rights Commission. In 2010, staff included the Director, Arlette Cooper Tinsley, the Deputy Director, Lorraine Smith, and administrative assistant, Lula Young. Looking ahead to 2011, I'm pleased that Deputy Director Lorraine Smith will assume the helm of the Commission as Director on May 27th. As the first African-American Director and Department Head, this is an historic occasion, decided unanimously by the Commissioners. Lorraine and I have worked as a team for sixteen years, and she worked previously for two other Directors. She understands this community's successes and its challenges, and she will focus on transitioning the agency into 2012, and training a new generation of civil rights workers for this community. While it is difficult to leave the Commission, it is made much easier by knowing that Lorraine is will serve the Commission as director!

The Commission is mandated by ordinance to prevent and eliminate unlawful discrimination, protect the rights of both Complainants and Respondents, and is responsible for enforcing Columbus Human Rights Ordinance. The Human Rights Ordinance protects persons from discrimination in employment, housing, education, credit and public accommodations. Charges can be filed alleging discrimination (based on race, religion, color, gender, disability, ancestry, national origin, pregnancy, familial status (housing only), and sexual orientation, gender identity and age (voluntary mediation only). Local ordinance also protects those who have filed a complaint or participated in the investigation of a complaint from retaliation for such actions. Anyone claiming to be aggrieved by an alleged unlawful practice, and who can articulate a prima facie case pursuant to a recognized legal theory of

discrimination, has the right to file a complaint charging discrimination under the ordinance of Columbus.

Most of the claims filed with the Commission in 2010 were employment, along with one housing complaint. (see case charts on pages 17-19 of this report). Harassment in the workplace and failure to accommodate disabilities on the job topped the type of cases filed. The Commission makes every effort to mediate or settle cases, and investigates complaints where mediation is not successful. Enforcement of the local human rights ordinance is about fair and equal treatment— justice— in our local community. Journalist and public servant Carl Rowan once said, “It is often easier to become outraged by injustice half a world away than by oppression and discrimination half a block from home.” But Columbus has always been a different kind of community. It is a city that strives for fair and equal treatment for all, in order to build a thriving, welcoming business environment. The most talented workers from around the world can feel confident when moving to Columbus, because Columbus works to create a welcoming community through a variety of public-private initiatives, and enforcement of local law prohibiting discrimination.

The cases that the Commission provided research and technical assistance in and were filed with federal and state agencies reflected the broad diversity and scope of human rights work—national origin, race, age, disability, gender, and retaliation were all bases for claims filed. Retaliation cases are very important to enforce, as they are filed by persons who believe that their choice to exercise their civil rights was the reason for retaliatory conduct in their workplace, school or housing. Civil rights are only as strong as peoples’ willingness to advocate for themselves, and they must be protected from retaliation.

*“Whatever career you may choose for yourself— doctor, lawyer, teacher - let me propose an **avocation** to be pursued along with it. Become a dedicated fighter for civil rights. - Make it a central part of your life. It will make you a better doctor, a better lawyer, a better teacher. It will enrich your spirit as nothing else possibly can. It will give you that rare sense of nobility that can only spring from love and selflessly helping your fellow man. Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for human rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country and a finer world to live in.”*

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

VOLUNTEER COMMISSIONERS

The City of Columbus Municipal Code states that the City Council shall appoint persons residing in Bartholomew County to serve on the Human Rights Commission for three-year, renewable terms, “serving without compensation and broadly representative of the community’s diversity.” Comprised of volunteer Columbus citizens, the Commission is able to effectively carry out its work because of the diversity of talent and experience brought to the Commission by each individual board member. For over twenty years, the City Council has chosen an open application process for Human Rights Commission appointments. Any

member of the community who wishes to serve on the Commission may fill out an application, which is then reviewed by the City Council member serving as a liaison to the Human Rights Commission—in 2008 Councilwoman Priscilla Scalf began her liaison duties for the Commission. Council Liaison Scalf continued as the liaison to the Commission in 2010. The Commission is extremely appreciative of her service to the Commission. Councilwoman Scalf, as well as other members of Council, review applications of prospective new commissioners and conduct interviews. The Human Rights Commission appreciates the time and care City Council takes by creating an open application process and selecting hard-working individuals with diverse backgrounds and experience to serve as volunteer commissioners. Commissioners Ian Kohen, Shiva Rallapalli and Rosalind Pegram were reappointed in 2010. New Commissioner Rhea Baker-Ipek was appointed to take over an unexpired term of Commissioner Pam Vincent. For the benefit of the reader, this report includes brief biographical information on current Commissioners:



Commissioner Rhea Baker-Ipek with her family and
Director Tinsley, receiving the **Oath of Office** from
Mayor Fred L. Armstrong

New Commissioner Rhea Baker-Ipek was appointed in 2010 to the Columbus Human Rights Commission to fill Commissioner Vincent's unexpired term, and in 2011 she was reappointed for three years. Ms. Baker-Ipek has an MBA in International Business, a BA in Foreign Languages with considerable experience abroad. She is currently a candidate for her Juris Doctorate degree at IU-Bloomington, commuting for class from Columbus, where she resides with her husband and son. Her life and work experience include being a full time Mom, working as a Sales and Product Trainer, and teaching High School. Her breadth of experience will serve her well as a Commissioner.

Commissioner Akua Agyei has lived in Columbus for over seven years and works at Cummins Inc. She came to the U.S. twelve years ago, leaving her home of Accra, Ghana, to earn her B.S. at Miami University of Ohio and her M.S. at Virginia Tech. She recently earned her MBA from Indiana University, while continuing to work full time. She currently serves as the Chair of the Cummins African & African-American Affinity Group (AAAAG).

She serves as the Commission's liaison to the Mayor's Multi-cultural Awareness Committee, as well as serving as Treasurer of the Commission in 2009. Akua recently brought a future Human Rights Commissioner into the world, her daughter, Oduma.

Commissioner Trena Carter, a more than twenty-year resident of Columbus, Commissioner Carter was appointed in late 2006. Trena works at Administrative Resources association (ARa), a non-profit governmental organization that works with local governments in Southern Indiana to assist in project planning and development to enhance quality of life by applying for and managing governmental grants, to implement those projects. She and her husband, Mike, are the parents of two daughters and have raised their family in Columbus. She has been a committed volunteer in the local schools, Girl Scouts, Leadership Bartholomew County and serves on the Human Resource Team and the Church Council at Sandy Hook United Methodist Church. Commissioner Carter served on the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the 2007 Annual Dinner Meeting in April, a special 45th anniversary celebration of the Commission.

Commissioner Ian Kohen was appointed to the Commission in 2004. He has been a member of the Columbus community for over seventeen years. Ian has held many positions at Cummins, Inc., including work as a Purchasing Leader and has been a Six Sigma Black Belt. His outside interests include spending time with his two sons Max and Henry and wife Mary, playing racquetball, being a Big Brother, working with teens in the Turning Point Dance Marathon, and being part of the Columbus Rotary Club. He has taught the "7 Habits of Highly Successful People" to many groups inside and outside of Cummins. In 2006, Commissioner Kohen chaired the Ad Hoc Committee that studied the issue of discrimination based sexual orientation, gender identity and age, as it related to enforcement mechanisms available to the Commission. Ian has served as liaison to the local Interfaith Forum and currently serves as liaison to the Gay/Straight Alliance.

Commissioner Greg Lewis is the Commission's liaison to the Interfaith Forum here in Columbus and represents the Commission at Columbus CAMEO. He is the chair of the social studies department at Columbus East High School, where he has taught since 1994, and Central Middle School, where he taught between 1992 and 1994. He has become well known for his portrayals of historic figures, including a different president each year for the last 14 years on Presidents' Day. He has lived in Columbus since 1984, with his wife Nancy and two children, Lauren and Austin. He was raised in Louisville, Kentucky, and earned degrees from Miami University of Ohio, Indiana University, and Indiana Wesleyan University. He has demonstrated his commitment to public service through his volunteer work with the American Red Cross - Bartholomew/Brown County Chapter, Dance Marathon for Turning Point, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Youth As Resources, Columbus Soccer Club, and many other community service groups, as well as being involved with many student groups at East

High School. Greg created and teaches an interdisciplinary English-U.S. History course called American Studies, and he developed a unit on diversity in America and makes issues of social justice a major focus of his teaching. In his spare time, Greg enjoys spending time with his family, playing soccer, hiking, traveling, and biking. In 2009, Greg traveled with a group of educators to Germany, a country and language he has long studied.

Commissioner Tony McClendon has lived in Columbus for sixteen years and he and his wife, Pat, have two daughters. He is the associate pastor at Faith Ministries, the head football coach at Central Middle School and the assistant track coach at East High School. He has in the past volunteered as a mentor at Northside Middle School in a program focused on at risk middle school boys called TALKS. He is a native of Atlanta, a graduate of Dartmouth College, works in sales management and as an adjunct instructor in the English department of Ivy Tech Community College. He has special skills as a public speaker that he brings to the Commission as well as a special interest in working with local youth. Tony is served as Vice-Chair of the Commission in 2009 and in the past, he has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues. He has also facilitated youth discussions in local schools, at the Commission's request. He has served on the Commission's nominating Committee. Tony recently began a new job with Bartholomew Consolidated Schools as their Director of Diversity, and he continues to teach at Ivy Tech.

Commissioner Gil Palmer was first appointed to the Commission in 1993, and he has garnered such respect from his fellow commissioners that he has been unanimously elected Chairperson every year for fourteen years. The Chairperson is required to work very hard for the Commission, as he is responsible for reviewing all findings of fact, and requests for subpoenas, restraining orders, and he must prepare and hold any necessary hearings. Gil, a graduate of Leadership Bartholomew County, is a State Farm Insurance agent who works long hours at his office, but at the same time works tirelessly on behalf of the Commission and as a volunteer in the community, including his service in the Columbus Rotary, Centerstone of Indiana and Centerstone Research Institute boards, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Advisory Council, IUPUC Board of Advisors, IUPUC Diversity Cabinet, BCSC Diversity Leadership Committee, Columbus Economic Growth Council and Senior Center Services board. He and his wife, Dawn, have two grown children and two grandchildren, with a third child, a grandson who will be born in 2010.

Commissioner Rosalind Pegram was first appointed to the Commission in 2007. Commissioner Pegram, who is from Puerto Rico, is a twenty-year resident of Columbus. She is a former teacher for Monroe and Bartholomew counties. Commissioner Pegram has a M.S. in Education from Indiana University-Bloomington and is bi-lingual in Spanish and English. She is currently working at her own business. Commissioner Pegram serves as the

Commission's liaison to the Immigration Issues Group of Columbus. She represented the Commission on the Immigration forum with Senator Greg Walker and Representative Milo Smith. She volunteers for Proyecto Salud-Volunteers in Medicine, and she is a Founding Board Member for the new Columbus Latin American Association.

Commissioner Shiva Rallapalli was reappointed to the Commission in 2010. Born in Hyderabad, India, Commissioner Rallapalli came to the United States in 2000 to pursue his Bachelor's degree in Computer Science at Michigan Technological University. He moved to Columbus in 2005 and he currently works for Humana Inc. as a Manager of Information Technology Applications Development. He lives with his wife Sheetal Hosmani, who also got her Bachelor's in Computer Engineering from Michigan Technological University. She works for Cummins, Inc. as a Technical Manager for Chrysler Onboard Diagnostics. Shiva enjoys running, working out, playing racket ball, watching movies and listening to music. He is proud to be a member of the Columbus Human Rights Commission, does speaking and training on behalf of the Commission, and is chair of the Hate Crimes Taskforce for the Commission.

Commissioner John Roberts joined the Columbus community nine years ago and he currently is Dean of The School of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana-Columbus, and in the music ministry at Faith Ministries. He has worked most of his life as an educator, teaching in the Louisville Public Schools. When he first came to Columbus, he worked as Christian Education Coordinator at First Presbyterian Church. He earned degrees at Morehead State University, the University of Louisville and National University. He has a particular interest in low income and minority students, and while working in Louisville, he served on a team that developed a successful enrichment program for at-risk students in the Jefferson County Public Schools. He has also worked with the disability community, and has an interest in issues facing senior citizens. John is a father, and a grandfather of three. He and his partner Thom just bought a new home in downtown Columbus and are renovating it. John has served on the Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission which studied and then recommended changes to the Rules and Regulations providing a mediation process for complaints of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, and chaired the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the Commission's 45th anniversary celebration. John serves as secretary to the Commission.

Commissioner John Stroh has lived in Columbus for twenty-five years with his wife and children, and he is engaged in the practice of law. Earlier in his career he worked as a public school teacher in Washington Township Public Schools where he met his wife, Beth, and developed an innovative team-teaching, multi-grade program. He has a long record of commitment to social justice, working as a church youth leader, school volunteer, professional actor, juvenile probation officer, U.S. Postal Employee, volunteer project peace

presenter and volunteer lawyer for Legal Aid. John has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues and he served on the 2006 Ad Hoc Committee that first studied and then recommended changes to the Commission's Rules and Regulations to provide a mediation process for complaints of gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination. An experienced mediator, the Commission is fortunate to have John's service on the Board. He serves as a liaison to the Inclusive Community Coalition (ICC).

COMPLIANCE, MEDIATION AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

[See graphics, pp. 17-19].

Civil rights law, at the local, state and federal level, has become increasingly complex in its nature and application. This increased complexity is principally due to the enactment of major legislation in the past decade, which affects the role of the Columbus Human Rights Commission at the local level because federal and state statutes and the resulting legal precedents impact interpretation of the local Human Rights Ordinance. The Commission's technical assistance program for businesses trying to comply with the law and for individuals seeking remedy has grown. Many businesses want to comply with federal, state and local statutes, but need help doing so. Individuals, for example, are unsure of how their rights to reasonable accommodation under the ADAAA, their FMLA rights, and sometimes their worker's comp rights overlap. The Commission offers support and technical assistance and then files a complaint with the appropriate agency, if technical assistance does not resolve the issue.

All complaints filed with the Commission this year were filed in the area of Employment except for one housing complaint. While the Commission did not receive formal complaints in public accommodation, or education, many instances of technical assistance allowed situations to be resolved informally, which is often best for the parties involved whenever possible.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE

The Commission is a party to written conciliation agreements, which resolve complaints of alleged discrimination filed with the agency. A Commission staff person is assigned to monitor the terms and conditions of these agreements, as well as Commission orders.

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

Columbus ordinance provides that any person who claims to be aggrieved by an unlawful practice in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and education and can articulate a prima facie case pursuant to a recognized legal theory of discrimination (*based on race, religion, color, gender, disability, ancestry, national origin, pregnancy, familial status (housing only), sexual orientation, gender identity and age (voluntary mediation only) and retaliation*) may file a complaint with the Columbus Human Rights Commission. The Commission shall review and, if necessary, investigate the complaint. Complaints must be filed within 90 days of the last discriminatory act alleged, except in housing, where some complaints may be filed 180 days from the last discriminatory act alleged.

An individual may write, e-mail, telephone or come into Columbus Human Rights Commission office to begin the filing process. If the complaint falls within the Commission's jurisdiction, a formal complaint may be submitted. The staff is available to assist in drafting a complaint based on information provided by the complainant. An employment, housing, or public accommodation complaint must be signed, verified and notarized before it can be officially filed with the Commission. Some inquiries were outside of the Commission's jurisdiction or beyond the timely filing limit and are referred to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other agencies. The Commission offers a voluntary mediation program in all complaints prior to investigation, at the option of the parties. Mediation services offer a possible alternative to complete investigation.

When mediation services are not selected by one of the parties, or when mediation services fail, a complaint may be sent for full investigation. The Commission is responsible for investigating all complaints filed. It is also responsible for conciliation of cases where the investigating commissioner has indicated there is probable cause to credit allegations of the complaints. During a full investigation the Commission staff person will interview the complainant, review relevant documents, conduct interviews with witnesses, and summarize the case for the investigating commissioner. The investigator's role is that of a neutral fact finder. The Commission staff does not determine the outcome of the case, but rather gathers and presents the facts with a recommendation, based on the application of relevant civil rights law, to a Chairperson of the Commission for a determination. All information discovered throughout the course of the investigation is gathered in an objective and impartial manner. Depending upon the information obtained during the investigative process, the Chair makes a determination of either "Probable Cause" or "No Probable Cause." An attempt will be made to reach a written settlement between complainant and respondent if the Commission finds "Probable Cause." An attempt will be made to reach written settlement between complainant and respondent if the Commission finds "Probable

Cause.” If conciliation efforts fail, the case may be scheduled for a public hearing. If conciliation efforts fail, the case may be scheduled for a public hearing.

The staff works hard to provide access to justice to all members of our community; in 2010, the Deputy Director conducted intakes with an interpreter provided to the complainant ten times, and the Director provided intake services with an interpreter twice.

MEDIATION PROGRAM

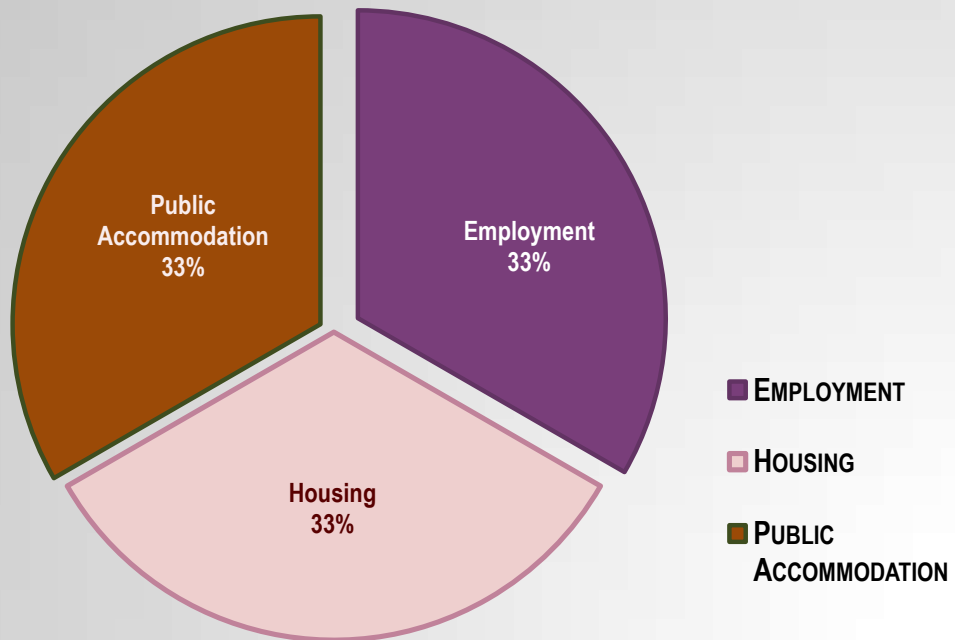
The Commission offers a voluntary procedure in which the parties to discrimination complaints filed with Commission may attempt to mediate and resolve their controversies short of having Commission investigate and process the complaint. Unlike conciliation—the mediation process can begin *prior to* an investigation, thereby saving both parties time and money. The mediation procedure has been an effective means of resolving complaints, as in some years, more than 75% of all CHRC cases were referred to mediation. The Commission is fortunate to have dedicated and hard-working Commissioners who serve as volunteer mediators, and mediation is offered at no cost to either party. In 2010, the office mediated over 50% of the complaints filed. If mediation is not chosen by both parties or if mediation fails, then an investigation is completed by the CHRC staff. If the CHRC staff recommends a Finding of Discrimination and that is accepted and issued by the Chair of the Commission, then parties are required to go to “conciliation.” Conciliation is similar to mediation, except the Commission is a party to any settlement and monitors compliance, and may have certain stipulations of its own for there to be settlement. If conciliation fails, which is extremely rare, the complaint will go to public hearing.

Mediation is entirely voluntary. Some mediations result in cash settlements, and other mediations may result in re-training or modifications in policy.

The Commission continues to emphasize equitable remedies to discrimination, including training, reinstatement as a tenant or employee, education, and restructured business processes in order to prevent future discrimination.

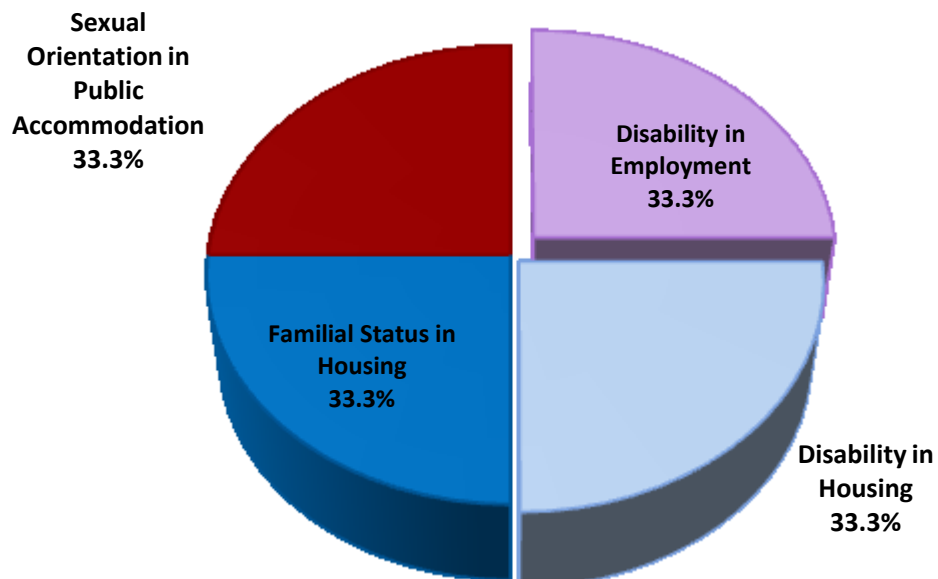
2010 Human Rights Commission Cases

CHRC Cases
Field of Alleged Discrimination

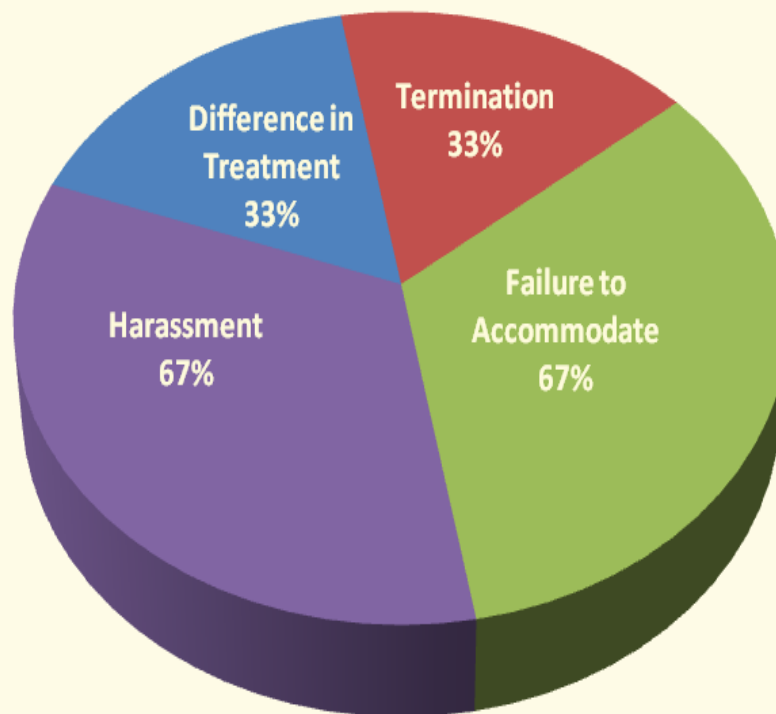


Basis of Alleged Discrimination

(Cases filed 01/01/2010 through 12/01/2010)



2010 CHRC Complaints Alleged Discriminatory Behavior

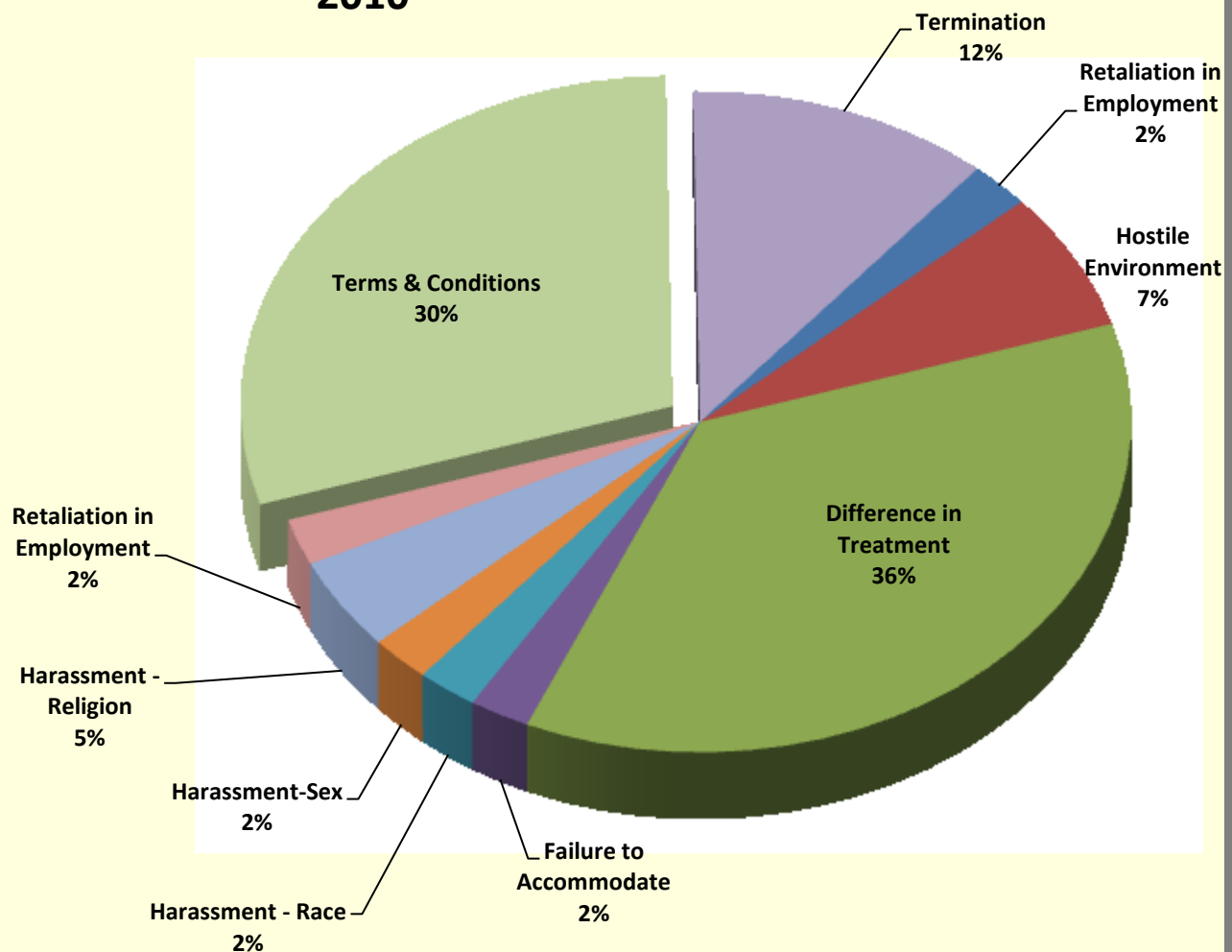


■ Difference in Treatment ■ Termination ■ Failure to Accommodate ■ Harassment

The remaining charts represent complaints that were filed with Technical Assistance provided by the Columbus Human Rights Commission. The agencies are identified as follows:

EEOC – Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
HUD – Department of Housing & Urban Development
ICRC – Indiana Civil Rights Commission

Alleged Discriminatory Behavior EEOC & HUD Complaints 2010



COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH 2010:

In addition to its enforcement and compliance activities, the Commission is also required by ordinance to inform the public about civil rights laws, what constitutes discrimination and how acts of discrimination can be avoided. The Columbus Human Rights Commission's technical assistance and training program sponsors, develops, and conducts a vast amount of training across the Columbus, especially considering the small size of the office. In addition to its enforcement and compliance activities, the Commission works to inform the public about civil rights laws, what constitutes discrimination and how acts of discrimination can be avoided.

The Columbus Human Rights Commission's technical assistance and training program sponsors, develops, and conducts training across Columbus. This task is accomplished through meetings, trainings and conferences that are open to the public, onsite training and presentations for private businesses, agencies, college-level classes, K-12 classes, and the development of the content on Human Rights pages on the website. During 2010, the agency conducted seminar and training sessions throughout the Columbus, training public and private organizations, civic groups, neighborhood organizations, realtors, landlords and schools. The Commission's information services are provided free of charge to individuals and organizations within our community. Civil rights topics most often requested included issues relating to sexual harassment, fair housing, diversity training, hate groups and hate crimes and the history of diversity in Columbus. In addition to information and training, the agency creates and maintains Commission publications. During 2010, the agency distributed hundreds of informational brochures and fielded telephone inquiries asking for assistance.

Publications of the Columbus Human Rights Commission include its Annual Report, its Rules & Regulations, brochures on topics such as *Human Rights*, *Fair Housing*, *Pregnancy Discrimination*, *Anti-Bullying/Harassment in Education* and the periodic publication of the Commission's newsletter. The webpages not only provide information on the Columbus Human Rights Commission, an oral history video of civil rights in Columbus, its Commissioners and the law it is empowered to enforce, but it has links to other state human rights organizations and various civil rights related web sites. The web page address is www.columbus.in.gov. (under services click on "human rights"). In 2011, the city plans to update and renew its web presence.

Public information and outreach on civil rights compliance issues have become incredibly important as businesses have increasingly outsourced to small and medium-sized businesses that lack in-house counsel or human resources departments. The Commission is aware that small to medium-sized businesses are the engine of the economy, and that to grow, those businesses must implement successful and legally compliant policies and procedures.

NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS IN 2010:

The Commission continued to collaborate and partner with other organizations concerned with human rights, in order to better fulfill our mission of “challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality”:

With a small staff and an enforcement mission mandated by ordinance, the Commission recognizes that it must leverage public education opportunities with local non-profit community agencies, in order to further the cause of human rights for all people. Some public/private collaborations include:

HERITAGE FUND

Deputy Director Lorraine Smith continued her role on Heritage Fund board as Co-chair and then Chair of the Heritage Fund’s Outreach Committee and service on the grants committee, and as advisor to the Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization. As Chair of the Outreach Committee, Lorraine is leading the follow-up Welcoming Community study in concert with consultant Fredricka Joyner and Lyn Morgan Heritage Fund staff Program Officer and the Outreach Committee, which will culminate in 2011. At the request of Heritage Fund Governance and Planning Committee, Lorraine led the Heritage Fund’s Donor Survey process to gauge the opinions of Heritage Fund donors regarding philanthropy in a myriad of areas including welcoming community. In collaboration with Program Officer and volunteer survey builder, Lorraine mapped out process, project deadlines, developed survey questions, reviewed respondent survey data and developed conclusions and recommendations to the Governance and Planning Committee and Board.

CAMEO

CAMEO, the Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization, continues to gain presence in the community while working on continuous improvement of its processes and procedures. CAMEO, an organization of nine ethnic associations held its inaugural Annual Meeting in 2010 where Tim Solso, CEO of Cummins Inc was the keynote speaker. The meeting, which was held at the Columbus Learning Center auditorium was filled to capacity. The first Mickey King Award was presented to Ryan Hou at CAMEO’s first annual meeting also. Lorraine developed the draft of CAMEO’s business plan. Lorraine serves on Education Initiative Committee, a collaboration of CAMEO and the African American Association and other education advocacy group representatives. Lorraine facilitated CAMEO’s first retreat in January where CAMEO developed its 2010 work plan and facilitated getting obtaining a speaker for MLK commemoration at the CAMEO meeting. Lorraine staffed CAMEO Ethnic Expo Information Booth, and facilitated conversations with Community Development and CAMEO Chair, Vice-Chair regarding CAMEO role in Ethnic Expo. As advisor, Lorraine attends Executive Committee meetings, CAMEO

monthly meetings and other committee meetings as needed to provide input and advice as needed. CAMEO will have its second Annual Meeting in May 2011 with Jim Bickel giving the keynote address. In 2010, Director Arlette Tinsley followed up on her CAMEO facilitation work from 2009 by attending CAMEO's Saturday retreat to define their goals and priorities for 2011. As Mayor recognized in his final State of the City address in 2011, this is an innovative project that will help Columbus fuel its economic growth in the future, as communities grow when they welcome newcomers. The Commission now has a representative to the group, and Commissioner Greg Lewis serves as the Liaison. All Commissioners, just like the community, are welcome to attend monthly CAMEO meetings.

COMMISSIONER LIAISONS:

The Commission has successfully implemented a Commissioner Liaison process, whereby Commissioners serve as the liaison to key groups in our community who have requested ongoing communication and collaboration with the Human Rights Commission. Several Commissioners, including Commissioners Lewis, Stroh, Kohen, Pegram, and Agyei serve as Liaisons to various groups in the community.

- **Mayor's Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee:** Commissioner Greg Lewis served as the Commission's representative to the Mayor's Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee in 2010, and the Human Rights Commission, and the Committee worked on several projects, including the Cultural Awareness website, Ethnic Expo, and Neighbors Talking events.
- **Leadership Bartholomew County 2010:** In November, Deputy Director Smith and Director Tinsley partnered with Fredricka Joyner, moderator of LBC, to offer diversity day training for LBC participants, focusing on all aspects of diversity.
- **NAACP:** The Commission continues to offer technical assistance and support to members of the NAACP and the organization as a whole. NAACP members have referred students to the Commission to get support for international education, as our donations account and policy permits.
- **Economic Diversity Council/African American Association:** Deputy Director Lorraine Smith's work in collaboration with the Columbus Area African-American Association continued in 2010. This community group formed in 2006, and in 2009 Chairperson Palmer represented the Commission in these discussions. In 2009, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith facilitated a series of discussions with this group to first look at the possibility of creating an African American Association, in order to participate in the new CAMEO group being formed by the Heritage Fund. The group decided to go in this new direction, and Deputy Director Lorraine Smith facilitated the formation of their bylaws and creation of the new Columbus African American Association, which includes African American members and members of the African

Diaspora. The new African American Association, first convened by Tom Harmon of Harmon Construction, Frank Griffin and Hubert Goodman of Cummins Inc., continues its original goal of advocating for the African American community as part of the economic development plan of the city and their long-term goal is to mobilize the African-American community based upon the ten 'covenants' outlined by Tavis Smiley in his book, *A Covenant with Black America*. The Association is developing subcommittees to research education, economic development and justice in the Columbus community.

- **Su Casa:** Staff continued to offer support to Su Casa clients when civil rights issues arise. Commissioner Rosalind Pegram is the liaison to this group.
- **Inclusive Community Coalition:** A new community group was formed in 2007 to focus on community education regarding sexual orientation and gender identity through non-political forums, and the Human Rights Commission voted to become a member of this group, with Commissioner John Stroh acting as Commission liaison. Commissioners and staff attended various ICC events in 2010.
- **Interfaith Forum:** The Commission continued to support this group's programming with Commissioner Greg Lewis acting as liaison.
- **Gay/Straight Alliance now the Columbus Pride Alliance:** Commissioner Ian Kohen was appointed as liaison for 2006 and continued in this role in 2010. Commissioner Kohen worked hard to maintain effective communication with the Pride Alliance. Commissioner Kohen also helped provide technical assistance to students in Columbus seeking to start a student G/SA, and Commissioner Kohen was integral in referring a G/SA meeting attendee to the Commission to file a Complaint in 2008. For 2011, Commissioner Rhea Baker-Ipek will serve as liaison to the Pride Alliance.
- **Police Audit and Review Committee:** Chairperson Palmer and Director Tinsley served as Human Rights representatives to the Police Audit and Review Committee's quarterly meetings in 2009. The Board of Works and Public Safety's resolution concerning the Audit and Review Committee requires the Human Rights Commission to send a representative to this Committee. One appeal to the Citizen's Review Board of the Audit and Review Committee were heard in 2010. The Director handles all of the processing/paperwork of such an appeal.

SHARPENING THE SAW—CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS:

Continuing Legal Education: Director Tinsley and Deputy Director Smith attended ongoing continuing legal education so as to offer the best service possible to the community members and Commissioners were offered conference and training opportunities.

SERVICE WITHIN THE CITY:

In 2000, the Mayor asked Director Arlette Tinsley to serve on the Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee for the city, and the members of the Committee elected her chair of the committee and she has continued to serve as chair for the last decade. The city offers its employees a 457 Deferred Compensation plan. This plan is voluntary for City of Columbus employees. It is offered in addition to the City of Columbus Pension Plan through the state (PERF). Both civilian and non-civilian employees may access the deferred compensation plan. Deferred compensation is a program that allows employees to save and invest today for retirement. Federal income taxes are deferred until assets are withdrawn usually during retirement when the employee may be in a lower tax bracket.

Under Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code, an employee may defer each year a maximum of 100% of their "gross compensation"* or annual dollar limit, whichever is less. The dollar limit for 2010 is \$16,500. Participation is handled through payroll deduction so an employee's taxes are reduced each pay period. Currently, 227 city employees take advantage of this benefit.

The city's plan allows employees to increase, decrease, stop and restart contributions as often as they wish, without fees or penalties, subject to the employer's approval. A 457 plan offers many advantages: Employees can reduce their current income taxes while boosting their retirement investments; Earnings accumulate tax deferred; An employee can dollar cost average through convenient payroll deductions; If an employee is 50 (or older) or within three years of normal retirement age and already contributing the maximum to their plan, they are allowed to make additional "catch-up" contributions; It is portable. If an employee changes jobs they can consolidate their savings in another public sector employer's 457 plan, a qualified 401 plan, a tax-sheltered 403(b) annuity plan, or a Traditional IRA.

The I.R.S. requires a Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee. Current members, appointed by the Mayor, include: Jim Worton, Gary Henderson, Oakel Hardy, Ben Wagner, Arlette Tinsley. Brenda Sullivan, the City Clerk-Treasurer, is plan administrator. The MISSION of the advisory committee is to recommendations to the Board of Works regarding establishing, supervising, and evaluating the investment program for the City of Columbus 457 Deferred Compensation Plan; and to consider each application for emergency withdrawal from the 457 plan by a current employee and to vote on compliance with appropriate IRS requirements for request for withdrawal, and to approve or disapprove the requested withdrawal. Arlette and her staff process all applications for withdrawals and maintain confidential 457 withdrawal information, working with the committee members, plan provider and the City Clerk-Treasurer's office. The committee provides advice to the Board of Works regarding the Plan.

HATE/BIAS 2010:

In 2010, hate graffiti was found in Columbus at least five times, including in public places such as parks, and in April on the building of a local church. The Columbus Police Department reported that the overall number of reports of graffiti had not increased– but perhaps the location and nature of the graffiti is what drew people’s attention in 2010. The Columbus Human Rights Commission is a longtime member of the **Indiana Hate Crimes Reporting network**, working to educate the community with regard to bias/hate crimes, bias/hate intimidation, and taking reports from the community, as needed, to submit to local law enforcement, the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, or federal law enforcement, as appropriate. The definition of “hate crime” in Indiana, for purposes of reporting under the state Bias Crimes Reporting Act, includes the commission of an A misdemeanor crime or more severe, motivated by hate of a particular group. Nevertheless, graffiti that is hate-filled is considered a hate incident, and the Commission will work works with any community member to repair damage and communicate the outrage we all feel in our community. The Commission attempts to facilitate the expedient removal of graffiti and to provide support to victims. City employees have worked hard to remove graffiti to public property quickly, and the police department has worked with owners of private property to cover and repair the damage and increase patrols. While often, hate graffiti does not rise to the level of a “hate crime” under the Indiana Bias Crime Reporting Statute, the Columbus community responds to repair the damage, express outrage and reaffirm our commitment to the safety of everyone. While graffiti is often caused by troubled youth, it remains a cause for concern, because youth can easily find like-minded individuals on the internet, and do so. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, hate groups have grown by 54% since 2000 in the U.S., and Indiana is home to 16 hate groups. According to the FBI, hate crimes have increased by 40% in the last decade. In fact, Columbus, in Bartholomew County, is surrounded by counties that have hate groups that claim those counties as a home.

The Commission formed a subcommittee of volunteer Commissioners in 2010, headed up by Commissioner Shiva Rallapalli, to coordinate and develop a community response to “hate incidents” (issues such as graffiti that fall short of the definition of hate crimes) as well as hate crimes. The work of the committee is ongoing.

The Director of the Commission has been invited to present several statewide presentations on hate groups in Indiana, including at the state conference, National Association of Social Workers (NASW)- Indiana. The Commission provides resources, technical assistance and training on hate crimes and hate groups.

2010 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: **ENFORCING THE ORDINANCE**

Objectives:

- Continuously improve procedures, policies and processes to effectively and efficiently enforce the new amendments to the Commission Rules and Regulations regarding age, sexual orientation and gender identity, through voluntary mediation
- Continue to implement strategies to increase efficiency and effectiveness in complaint investigations and case processing:
- Close minimum of 12 cases by January 1, 2011, and continue to make efficient and effective investigations and case processing the top priority of staff with a goal of closing each complaint filed in 2010 within one year of the date it is filed.
- Continue to facilitate settlement between the parties whenever possible.
- Offer training to any new Commissioners so that they may assume their duties.
- Update the Commission's Secretary's Manual to reflect changes in process and procedures due to changes in Rules and Regulations.

Goal: **EDUCATING THE PUBLIC**

Objectives:

- Implement Six Sigma Voice of the Customer improvements with Commissioners and re-vamp Commissioner training to create "Commissioner as Human Rights Ambassador" Speaker model
- Re-allocate Director and Deputy Director's time to allow Commissioners to take a significant role in community education
- Create Speakers' Bureau brochure highlighting Commissioners
- Continue newsletter distribution and maintenance of websites (as economically feasible).
- Continue to provide technical assistance and training to local businesses, organizations and schools, as requested, as office schedule allows and using existing training materials.
- Continue to send Commission staff and volunteers to general speaking engagements throughout the community to educate the community regarding the work and mission of the CHRC, as office schedule allows and using existing training materials.
- Support the creation and independence of CAMEO, the Columbus Multi-Ethnic Organization, and their strategies and goals for operating as a cultural welcoming center for the community
- Support the Mayor's Multicultural Committee's work
- Continue Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment training as requested
- Continue to distribute the Oral History video in all appropriate forums
- Annual Dinner
- Essay Contest and Poster Art Contest
- Black History Month} Continue projects done in past as applicable
- Women's History Month} Continue projects done in past as applicable
- Continue to build and organize CHRC lending library of human rights resources, books and training materials

Goal: **NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

Objectives:

- Maintain Commission representative on Mayor's Council for Multicultural Awareness and provide technical assistance
- Maintain Commission representative on community's Gay/Straight Alliance, Transit Committee, Mayor's Cultural Awareness Committee, BCSC's school conflict resolution committee, BCSC Bullying Prevention Task Force, Audit & Review Committee, Immigration Issues Forum, The Interfaith Forum, LBC and the Inclusive Community Coalition.
- Explore additional Liaison roles for Commissioners in the community
- Continue to provide training and technical assistance to LBC as requested, and collaborate on community forums as requested
- Continue to support Welcoming Community Projects, as requested
- Continue newsletter distribution and maintenance of websites (as economically feasible)
- Support the work of the I.U.P.U.C. and Ivy Tech Diversity Cabinet as requested

Goal: CHALLENGING ATTITUDES & SYSTEMS THAT CREATE BARRIERS TO EQUALITY

Objectives:

- Schools: Martin Luther King celebration— help with planning if requested; Schools: Complaint Resolution Process--- maintain appointee as requested by BCSC
- Explore Commissioner role in supporting with BCSC Schools
- Disability Awareness: continue to provide information, research and support for advocates in the community.
- Collaborate with BCSC, NAACP, as well individual community leaders, agencies and organizations to help remedy the achievement gap in our community, relative to minority youth and to address current human rights issues in the community.
- Support the Mayor's Multicultural Awareness: maintain appointee and provide technical assistance, as requested.

--- ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION: December, 2009

COMMENTS ON THE HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

HISTORY

The Columbus Human Rights Commission had its beginnings in 1962 when Mayor E. A. Welmer created the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations. The Commission began as a small group of concerned and respected local citizens with no power of legal enforcement. Complaints were filed in the Mayor's office or with individual Commissioners appointed by the Mayor. The Commissioners' only tool was their personal commitment to the formidable work of the Commission and their powers of verbal persuasion—they called it "friendly persuasion." The Commission, at this time, functioned under challenging conditions, without enforcement powers or city funding.

In 1972, because the City Council recognized the need for the Commission to have stronger tools with which to combat discrimination, City Council passed an Ordinance that gave the Commission legal enforcement powers. At this time, the name was changed from the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations to the Columbus Human Rights Commission. In 1975, a part-time Administrative Assistant for the Commission was hired and funded by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). In 1977, the City Council reaffirmed its commitment to a community that does not tolerate discrimination by funding the Commission. In the 1980s and most recently in 1992, the jurisdiction and scope of the Human Rights Ordinance was expanded by City Council, transforming the Columbus Human Rights Commission into the comprehensive civil rights enforcement agency it is today.

PURPOSE OF LOCAL COMMISSIONS:

Most historians place the beginning of the civil rights movement in the era 1950 through 1968. Beginning in 1967 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1967, the federal government passed the most significant civil rights legislation that this country would ever see and for the first time, the full force of the federal government was exercised against discrimination in this country. This passage sent a strong message that this country stood firmly behind the concepts of equal opportunity and non-segregation. The passage of the legislation was passed with the notion discrimination is not bound by state, region or locality and that local governments support the effort of anti-discrimination. Just as the federal government serves as the conscience of the nation regarding discrimination, localities serve as the conscience of cities and towns. To address the broad nature of discrimination, which can occur in various facets of community life, many states and localities within those states created human rights commissions to fill in the gaps between federal, state and local efforts to help combat discrimination. The continuing attack on the problem of discrimination must be equally broad. It must be both private and public – it must be conducted at national, state, and local levels – it must include action from the legislative, judicial and executive branches. Discrimination knows no sectional or state boundaries. As a result, the Columbus Human Rights Commission currently operates in a legal system of parallel jurisdiction – the local ordinance enforced by the Commission contains language very similar to state statute, enforced by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, and federal statutes, enforced by various federal government agencies.

COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONTRIBUTES TO THE VITALITY OF ITS COMMUNITY BY PLAYING AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN A BROAD CIRCLE OF REMEDIES IN FIVE MAIN AREAS:

Even with progress over the past four decades, discrimination persists and limits opportunity – all of which negates the economic health and quality of life of a community. As a result, local commissions exist to make sure that everyone in the community has an equal opportunity in employment, housing, education, credit and public accommodations. Local commissions don't exist to make money or produce a profit; it doesn't produce a tangible product. But a fundamental question for many is: how do local Commissions, such as the Columbus Human Rights Commission, contribute to the overall success and welcoming nature of a community?

The Columbus Human Rights Commission contributes to Columbus' vitality and excellent quality of life by playing an integral role in a broad circle of remedies in five main areas: (1) Strategic partnering in Economic Development, (2) Comprehensive Enforcement of Civil Rights Laws, (3) Proactive Enforcement by providing free technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach to organizations, (4) the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics, and (5) in providing local solutions to local problems:

The Commission is a strategic partner in economic development:

Clearly, discrimination hampers the economic growth of a community by preventing the maximum development and utilization of our manpower. The federal and state governments have decided that local civil rights enforcement is a priority they wish to encourage because federal and state civil rights agencies continue to be over-burdened with cases, under-staffed and stretched resources and they cannot always provide the most comprehensive enforcement of civil rights law. As a result, some federal and state grants require a community to have local civil rights enforcement to even be considered for the grant money, and most federal and state grants favor applicants who have local enforcement of civil rights. Although the city's budget is made up of local tax dollars, a portion of the city's budget each year is made up of federal and state funds, not just local tax dollars. And because the federal and state governments have control over these taxpayer-supported funds, they can choose which communities will receive federal and state funds. The local Commission helps the city receive over 2 million dollars a year in state and federal grants for economic development that make possible senior housing, affordable housing, city buses and bus transportation, better roads and bridges, better technology for crime-fighting and many other improvements.

The Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement of civil rights laws:

The city's decision to have local civil rights enforcement is like the city's decision to have a local police force—the county's sheriff's department is still there and the state police are still there, and the FBI is still there, but citizens of Columbus benefit by getting a police response to their 911 call in roughly five minutes, rather than possibly waiting longer if another law enforcement agency had to respond. By having local enforcement of civil rights, the city receives more comprehensive enforcement. The strong institutional presence of the local commission helps maximize equal opportunity services.

Local Commissions ensure that individuals have meaningful access to EEO technical expertise and the investigatory process. By responding effectively to a wide array of discrimination cases that have varying levels of complexity, claimants are ensured that they have access to enforcement processes to vindicate citizens' rights.

The Commission has jurisdiction to look into complaints filed against employers with six or more employees, which is smaller than the EEOC's jurisdiction. The Columbus Human Rights Commission is the only agency required to investigate all officially filed complaints of

discrimination in the City of Columbus. What does that mean in real terms? It means the little guy can get help. It means a server in a restaurant who is sexually harassed can get help, even if she does not work for a national chain of restaurants. The Columbus Human Rights Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement and a quicker response.

The Commission provides cost effective technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach programs, in order to prevent local problems before they occur:

While Columbus is home to a Fortune 500 company who has attorneys and human resource professionals working in-house, Columbus is also home to many small businesses that do not have the resources to have an attorney on retainer or have a large personnel department. Yet smaller businesses must comply with civil rights laws, too, and those same businesses support the work of the Commission through their payment of local tax dollars, as they do all local government services. The Commission provides local businesses with technical assistance without charge that is not available from state and federal agencies.

The staff of the Commission answer business people's questions on the phone, provide model policies and other resources, and provide training without charge to local employers and their employees, to local property management companies and their employees, to local public and private schools, and to local places of public accommodation. Area businesses receive an extremely high level of service from the Commission, which they support through their payment of local taxes. A local commission facilitates cost effective, efficient delivery of services in the prevention of discrimination and remedy of discrimination.

The intangible value of these trainings and resources offered by the Commission come in the form of having a direct impact upon changed behavior in our schools, workplaces and public accommodations, with a good deal of the work done behind the scenes. For instance, so much work done behind the scenes is nevertheless very valuable to the community, and those individualized resources and support are not available on a federal and state level. The local commission provides cost-effective, efficient delivery of human rights services.

The Commission provides Columbus with the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics:

The Columbus community is changing demographically, which creates a need to respond in a way that facilitates community growth and stability and allows all community members to prosper. Changing demographics and shifting population trends only heighten the critical need for outreach into local communities. People must have confidence in a community's ability to respond effectively when they seek assistance in vindicating their rights. But the presence of the Columbus Human Rights Commission makes Columbus well positioned to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse community it serves. As a critical piece to creating a welcoming community and a healthy quality of life, the Columbus Human Rights Commission partners with community groups to educate community members about their legal rights and to educate employers about their legal obligations – while also bridging understanding on cultural differences.

The Commission, a local, all-volunteer eleven-member Board, ensures that here is a local alternative – local solutions to local problems, rather than civil rights law enforcement agencies from the federal government and the state government being the only alternative—and therefore coming to Columbus to investigate and enforce all civil rights violations.

The Commission was originally founded when there was no financial incentive to provide local enforcement of civil rights. Local citizens saw that there were problems of discrimination in Columbus that were not being adequately addressed by state and federal agencies, and decided

to address them locally. According to testimony from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, it is generally held that a complaint handled at the local level affords an opportunity for a more expedient response and a greater potential for a satisfactory resolution. Many Columbus citizens believed, and still believe that the best solutions to challenges facing this community will come from within this community. All staff persons are required to live in or adjacent to Bartholomew County, and all of the volunteers who serve as Commissioners live in Bartholomew County. The Commission is controlled by an eleven-member Board of volunteers, appointed by City Council and sworn into office by the Mayor. The community originally founded the Commission because it was the right thing to do, and the reason the Commission continues to serve the community is not only because it makes sense financially, but simply because it is the right thing to do.

The Commission's forty-eight-year history stands for the principle that Columbus values all members of the community. Columbus is open to persons of all races, religions, abilities and ethnic backgrounds to join the community, contribute, and be fully included. Beginning in 1962, with wisdom and foresight, elected officials and other community leaders created the Commission in order to enforce the principles of fair treatment, respect, and inclusion, and with that same wisdom and foresight, today's elected officials and community leaders continue to sustain a strong Human Rights Commission. The continued support of City Council members and Mayors from both political parties has given Columbus a progressive human rights ordinance that identifies our community as committed to equal treatment and willing to strive toward full inclusion in all aspects of community life.

2011 BENJAMIN M. KING HUMAN RIGHTS ESSAY CONTEST & J. IRWIN MILLER HUMAN RIGHTS ART CONTEST REPORT

2011 Essay Topic: “Listen to a Life”

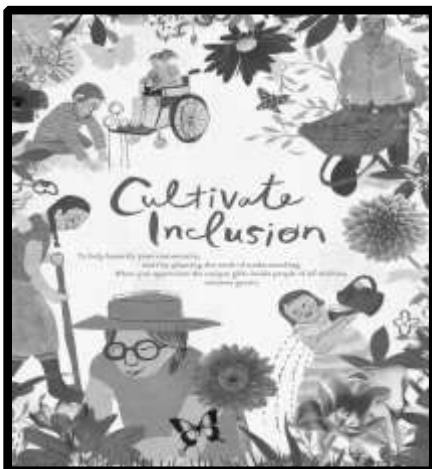
What can you learn when you listen to a life? Young people can become more aware of their own dreams and goals – and what's needed to achieve them – when they hear the real-life stories of older adults. Young people can develop an appreciation for the ongoing value and contributions made by older adults – thereby helping to prevent age discrimination in our society. The national Listen to a Life Essay Contest is also an opportunity to build closer connections between young and old as they get to know each other in new, often unexpected ways.

2011 Art Contest Topic: “Cultivate Inclusion”:

Each March, Disability Awareness Month is celebrated throughout Indiana and the nation. Since adults and children with disabilities represent more than 19 percent of Indiana's population, disability awareness is important for all of us. Led by the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, the goal of Disability Awareness Month is to increase awareness and promote independence, integration and inclusion of all people with disabilities.

The 2011 campaign theme from Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities is “Cultivate Inclusion.” The poster artwork for the theme features a diverse group of people – of different ages, ethnicities and physical abilities working together to plant a colorful urban flower garden. The text encourages everyone to contribute to not only a beautiful community but also, an inclusive community, by being open to and appreciating the unique gifts of others.

People with disabilities want to tear down barriers. A barrier is anything that prevents or hinders people with disabilities from being independent, productive and included in the mainstream of the community. There are physical as well as attitudinal barriers.



**“To help beautify your community, start by
planting the seeds of understanding. When
you appreciate the unique gifts inside people
of *all* abilities, *everyone* grows”**

**--Indiana Governor's Council
for People with Disabilities**

**2011 BENJAMIN M. KING HUMAN RIGHTS ESSAY
& J. IRWIN MILLER HUMAN RIGHTS ART
CONTEST WINNERS**

Winners of the Benjamin M. King Essay and J. Irwin Miller Art Contests are honored at the Commission's annual dinner where they are presented with a \$100 savings bond, and a book of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermons and writings. The Human Rights Commission congratulates the following winners of the 2011 Essay & Art Contests:

Elementary Art Division

WINNER: Jenna Hashagen

Parkside Elementary School – 5th Grade

Teacher: Edie Logston



Middle School Art Division

WINNER: Hannah Buening

Central Middle School – 7th Grade

Teacher: Mindy Summers



Elementary Essay Division

WINNER: Jannis Anderson

Parkside Elementary – 5th Grade

Teacher: Edie Logston



Middle School Essay Division

WINNER: Brooklyn Taulman

Central Middle School – 7th Grade

Teacher: Mindy Summers



High School Essay Division

WINNER: Susahnah Beardall

Home School – 12th Grade

Teacher: Mrs. Jackie Beardall



2011 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ESSAY/ART CONTEST PARTICIPATING JUDGES AND TEACHERS

Coordinating a countywide essay/art contest is a major undertaking that would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of volunteer judges, who are citizens from the community who gave up their time for several weeks in order to read the essays and select the winners. Area teachers, many of whom made the contest part of their school assignments, supported the essay contest, thereby insuring its success.

PARTICIPATING JUDGES

Kevin Altevogt	Carla Barrett	Rick Caldwell
Evan Childers	Bhavana Deshpande	Joseph Dosterglick
Jodi Engelstad	Cindy Felsten	Steven Ferree
Susi Gentry	Sherri Godsey	Sarah Grey
Shirley Handley	Wayne Hanrattie	Marie Henning
Gbenga Ige	Justin Hohn	Kylee Jones
Alan Kilbarger	Ric King	Andrew Kirk
Ian Kohen	Mary Kohen	Ramy Mesiha
Rajani Modiyani	Janice Montgomery	Matt Myers
Chinonye Nweke	Prachi Pathak	Disha Patel
Kristi Putnam	Micheal Reed	John Roberts
Josh Seiferth	Michael Seigel	Susan Staley
Roxanne Stallworth	Ginger Stawicki	Barbara Stevens
Daniel Stewart	Yan Tang	Warren Totten
Sharmila Vivekanandan	Tim Vrana	Marwan Wafa
Warren Ward	Keith Weedman	David Westenberger
April Wolfe-Scott	Thom Weintraut	Richard Whitney
Laura Young	Mary Ann Young	

2011 ESSAY/ART CONTEST PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

RITA BASS - PARKSIDE	ANDREW FRAZITA - CSA LINCOLN
EDIE LOGSTON - PARKSIDE	JERRY MAULIN - ABC STEWART
ANGELA SPURGEON - CENTRAL M. S.	BRIDGET STEELE - CSA LINCOLN
JOE STEELE - CENTRAL M. S.	MINDY SUMMERS - CENTRAL M. S.
BECKY WILLIAMS - SOUTHSIDE	





ESSAY WINNER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIVISION

BY JANNIS ANDERSON

5TH GRADE

PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY

Teacher: Mrs. Edie Logston

"Always Finish What You Started"

Winifred Anderson, my grandmother, has worked throughout her life to make her communities better places to live. She grew up in Austin, Texas, moved to Chicago, and finally settled in Chestertown, Maryland.

Throughout her life, Mrs. Anderson has admired Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and President Barrack Obama. These people stood out in particular because they all held/hold good values: include everyone, care for the ones with less, and work to make the world right.

Mrs. Anderson has also worked toward these values. For most of her career, she helped people with disabilities get a proper education. In the beginning and middle of the 20th century, getting a **proper** education with a disability was close to impossible! She wrote a book called **"Negotiating the Special Education Maze"** with 3 other people. They rewrote this book 4 times in order to update the information in it.

My Grandmother is one of the founders of the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC), a training center for families and professionals who work with children and youth with disabilities (located in Alexandria, Virginia). Prior to her work at PEATC she was a founder and director of Resurrection Children's center, an inclusive early childhood school, also in Alexandria! Mrs. Anderson did leave a mark for education in Alexandria; from writing her book to founding the PEATC! One thing is certain. Winifred Anderson really did "finish what she started"!





**ESSAY WINNER
MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION**

BY BROOKLYN TAULMAN

7TH GRADE

CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

Teacher: Mrs. Mindy Summers

The Everlasting Friendship

The year was 1946; my grandma Alice Taulman was five at the time. The place was Brooklyn, New York. As my grandma was on her way to the local park, she saw a small African-American girl. This was very rare at the time for an African-American to be in my grandmother's neighborhood. As my grandma approached the little girl, she noticed she was behind a gate playing in her yard. The little girl looked the same age as her. My grandma walked by the little girl's house everyday on her way to the park and eventually became very good friends. My grandma finally got invited by Brenda to come into their gated yard and play. My grandma asked why Brenda had to stay behind the gate and Brenda said her mother said it was not safe for her being the only black family in the whole neighborhood. My grandma was made fun of and even beaten up sometimes for being friends with an African-American at the time. But my grandma never stopped being friends with the little African-American girl named Brenda.

As the riots broke out in Brooklyn, my grandmother was forced to leave the city and her best friend behind to live in San Francisco with her mother's family. My Grandmother left San Francisco at the age of 12 and returned home to New York.

Upon Returning to New York, they had no place to stay. They were forced to live on the streets for 2 days before my Grandma's mother ran into Brenda's mom who invited them to stay with them. My Grandmother and her morn stayed with Brenda's family for a year before moving out and they became my grandma's second family. Brenda and my Grandma are still friends today after 64 years.





**ESSAY WINNER
HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION**

**BY SUSAHNAH BEARDALL
12TH GRADE**

HOME SCHOOL

Teacher: Mrs. Jackie Beardall

A truth I have been taught since I was a young child was to "lead by example." I have been blessed with parents who have been a good example me throughout my childhood; yet.. it was not until I was much older that I came to know the impact someone else's life-experience could have on me.

I began cheering when I was seven years old. It was hard work. I went to practices, conditioned and studied my craft. I soon found that my dedication and hard work began paying off. In time, I became a competitive cheerleader and that put a whole new spin on cheerleading. I loved the performance aspect of cheering especially in front of judges. There was no greater feeling of in the world.

Unlike cheering for my elementary basketball and middle school football teams, I had to train harder, condition more, and take risks that required courage and physical tenacity. I threw myself into every aspect; I didn't want to miss a thing. This was my joy and a good chunk of my life until I injured my back.

I am lucky to have caught the injury when I did otherwise I would have had to go through back surgery. I did, however, have many painful doctor visits, medication that made me sluggish and pain that kept me on edge all the time. As the days progressed, I became tired and worn down. I wasn't allowed to drive, I could not participate in any sports and I found it hard to sleep because of the decrease in activity.

Public functions and events that I usually enjoyed met with pain and frustration. Because of my desire to keep moving forward and to maintain a "be tough" attitude, I held head held high...ok, mostly because it hurt too much to put it down. I dreaded any social interaction, I felt like I did not fit in and that my friends would be better off with someone who was able to run around and be spontaneous with. Then I met a wonderful lady in my church. Her name is Judy Lifferth. She told me she could see I was stiff and she had heard about my back being injured. At the time, I felt as though she pitied me, but I was blind at first to see that she simply understood because you see, Judy has Multiple Sclerosis also know as MS.

Judy likes to keep a journal. She has a hope that one day her grandchildren will read her journal and listen to her life. A few weeks after my injury, I began to talk to Judy more. She was always so cheerful and kind to me. When I walked into my church's sacrament meeting, I would find her and talk to her. She would tell me I looked better and simply by her kindness, lifted my spirits.

One day, Judy asked me if I could help her with typing transcribing her journal. I was grateful for the opportunity to help her in some way, so I agreed. Because of her weakening muscles,

Judy's eyesight is very weak. She can no longer drive, and because of her MS, it is difficult for her to walk. Helping her type seemed like a little thing I could do to help her, but she ended up helping me.

After reading and typing about her trial with MS, I began to feel very humble. I had been very blind to how lucky I was. I could walk, read, write and move with ease. Judy's eyes and legs may be weak, but her heart is strong. She taught me to push through my trials with a smile on my face. I would not be the person I am today without her. I love her and am forever indebted for the love she has shown me.



2011 Quotable Quotes



“Building a house is like building a life, without a good solid base,
your life will fail.”

“Love takes effort; you have to make it happen,
and it is more a verb than a noun.”

“... no matter what goes wrong, as long as it happens
while helping, it is worth it.”

“The lesson I learned was it is good to be away from home to be independent,
make your own choices and be responsible.”

“Some people catch power like a baseball and toss it on quickly
while others keep it too long.”

“...people are threatened by others with power to make positive change.”

“... even though life may have its ups and downs, as long as you persevere and push
through, you will end up happy and fulfilled in the end.”

“When you listen to the story of someone’s life it makes you think, not only about you own
life, but about what you want to do with your life.”

“The moral to this story is never do something you don’t
want anyone to hear about.”

[My grandmother] “lived her life as only an optimist can and had a sun
that uplifted all storm clouds that stood in her way.”

“Things don’t matter more than people. Never take the
ones you love for granted.”

“You should always believe in yourself.”

“... there is no better feeling than saving someone.”

“Whatever happens, do what you think is right and don’t regret it later.”

“The mind is always right, no matter who is its owner.”

2011 Quotable Quotes

“Perseverance is the Key . . . most important thing in life is to persevere.”

“...you sometimes have to work hard to achieve your dreams. After that, you are unstoppable.”

“If you have the chance to listen to someone, take it. One’s knowledge can be yours to keep, to live your life to your own life experiences and to pass down to later generations.”

“Waste not – want not applies to may things as well as time.”

“My grandfather’s greatest advice is that the art of being wise is knowing what to ignore and one should never do anything which goes against one’s conscience.”

My grandmother, “. . . believes that the most important things in life are to take advantage of opportunities that come along, and to not be afraid.”

“He also believes that you can control your behavior but can’t control your emotions, you can only educate your emotions.” [grandfather]

“Keep focused in learning and you will have much to give our world.”

“Judy has found it is always best to believe in your dreams and goals, even if you’re dreaming alone.”

“My grandmother may not have finished college, but she is a very intelligent, successful person. This proves that making smart decisions ‘truly shapes your life’”

“Even a difficult situation can be made easy if looked through a positive attitude.”

“Looking for some advice about life? Then visit the oldest person near you”

“always be mindful of the needs of people who are less fortunate than others.”

“To learn and grow, one must stretch and challenge oneself”

“Mike believes that whether you believe in the war or not, you should always support the soldiers coming home.”

“you don’t have to overcome every challenge to be successful, but you do have to be willing to accept challenges when they come.”

“you need to be strong enough to admit defeat when you know that you can’t win and keep your head held high. Doing that takes just as much strength as it does to overcome challenges.”

“when you gave someone a ‘hands up instead of hands down’ they would be able to pull themselves up.”



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**WISH TO THANK THE FOLLOWING
FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND HARD WORK**



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2006 – 2011



Director Arlette Cooper Tinsley

1995 - 2011



The Columbus Human Rights Commission

Columbus, Indiana

April 28, 2011

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AND FOR
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The Columbus Human Rights Commission

Columbus, Indiana

April 28, 2011

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The Honorable Fred L. Armstrong
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**Thank you for your support
over the last sixteen years!**



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1926 - 2010



David Johnson-Bey
1940 - 2010



Paul V. Jones
1958 - 2011



Cindy Winterrowd
1944 - 2010





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